

## **STATE OF ILLINOIS – ARRA BROADBAND REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **SUMMARY**

Increasing access to broadband services and creating economic opportunity are top priorities for the State of Illinois. As ARRA contains highly competitive funding opportunities for broadband infrastructure and related programming, the State of Illinois has established a technical assistance network to support Illinois-based applications. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) in collaboration with Connect Illinois will serve as a point of contact for accessing state assistance.

### **What services will be provided?**

*The consultant services will provide technical assistance, review proposal drafts, recommend areas for improvement, and assist with the technical dimensions of submitting federal grant proposals online. Assistance services will be designed to match the needs of the entities submitting ARRA proposals. The consultants will not draft applications, they are only available to provide technical assistance.*

### **Who will provide the service?**

*A consortium of five public universities will provide technical assistance and grant-writing support to entities wishing to submit federal broadband ARRA proposals. Generally speaking, each university will be assigned a set of counties as a service area, however the workload will be distributed based on the demand for assistance. Participating universities include:*

- *Western Illinois University, Macomb;*
- *University of Illinois Chicago;*
- *University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign;*
- *Southern Illinois University Medical School, Springfield;*
- *Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and;*
- *Illinois Resource Network, Moline.*

### **How can I access these services?**

*To utilize these services, a potential applicant for federal funds must request services. To this end, the applicant must submit a request for assistance application that details how that project meets the ARRA criteria. DCEO economic development professionals will quickly screen applications to verify that the proposed project meets the ARRA criteria and that the requested technical assistance is appropriate.*

### **Who is eligible for state assistance?**

*To qualify for consortium assistance, the proposing entity must be:*

- *An Illinois-based public or private sector entity whose proposal provides service in Illinois, or*
- *A public or private sector entity based outside of Illinois but whose proposal provides service in Illinois, and in which case technical assistance would only be provided to that component of a proposal which directly serves Illinoisans, and*
- *An entity who meets one of the standards shown above, completes the state application, and is successfully screened by DCEO*

### **What is the state screening process?**

*The state applications for assistance will be reviewed by DCEO economic development professionals to determine whether applications meet ARRA eligibility criteria. Those projects that meet the initial screening will be offered technical assistance and grant-writing support.*

**What is the timeline/deadline to access this service?**

*Organizations that request technical assistance for ARRA broadband NOFAs will be accepted on a rolling basis.*

**Where should applications be submitted?**

*Applications should be e-mailed to [ta.broadband@illinois.gov](mailto:ta.broadband@illinois.gov). Questions regarding this program should be directed to Mark Pradun at [mark.pradun@illinois.gov](mailto:mark.pradun@illinois.gov)*

**Is there a fee for this service?**

*There is no direct cost for clients to access the technical assistance; however, there is an expectation that the organization will submit an ARRA broadband application. Each university consultant will work as a subcontractor under the Connect Illinois initiative.*

**Will my proposal remain confidential?**

*An important aspect of support for promising, competitive proposals is the necessity for confidentiality to protect the interests of clients. Consortium participants will be expected to treat their clients' proposals with confidentiality and, if necessary, to be signatories to Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA's) if so requested by a client.*

**What are the state ARRA broadband priorities?**

*Priority for providing state assistance and/or support will be given to Illinois projects that:*

- *Facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas;*
- *Provide access to broadband service to consumers residing in unserved and/or underserved areas;*
- *Provide broadband access, education, awareness, training, equipment, and support community anchor institutions (e.g., schools, libraries, medical facilities), or organizations and agencies serving vulnerable populations (e.g., low-income, unemployed, aged), or job-creating strategic facilities located in state- or federally-designated economic development areas;*
- *Improve access to, and use of, broadband service by public safety agencies; and*
- *Stimulate the demand for broadband, economic growth, and job creation.*

**What is the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity?**

*The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's mission is to bolster and improve Illinois' competitiveness in the changing global economy. Among the Department's top priorities: creating and retaining high quality jobs, maintaining a well-trained workforce and building strong communities.*

**What is Connect Illinois?**

*DCEO has contracted with the Partnership for a Connected Illinois (Connect Illinois) to develop and implement a strategy to encourage and support the partnership of the public and private sectors in the continued growth of broadband for the State's residents and businesses. The immediate goal of this initiative is to assist Illinois' ARRA applicants and develop a comprehensive Illinois broadband map. Connect Illinois is funded by the Illinois High Speed Internet Services and Information Technology Act ([Public Act 95-684](#)).*